

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus for adjusting a gradation range of an input image, comprising:

photographing condition estimation means for estimating a photographing condition of the input image;

5 selection means for selecting an arrangement of a weight coefficient based on the photographing condition;

characteristic amount calculation means for calculating a characteristic amount with respect to the input image;

histogram generation means for generating a weighting histogram related to the characteristic amount based on the arrangement of the weight coefficient;

10 gradation conversion curve calculation means for calculating a gradation conversion curve based on the histogram; and

~~gradation correction~~ conversion means for performing
15 gradation conversion using the gradation conversion curve so as
 to perform gradation correction on the input image ~~on the basis~~
 ~~of the photographing condition~~ to adjust the gradation range to a
 predetermined gradation range.

2. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the photographing condition estimation means estimates ~~a~~ the photographing condition based on

~~the basis of~~ at least one ~~piece of information~~ of focal

5 information, photometric information, zoom position information,
multi-spot photometric information, line-of-sight input
information, and strobe flash information.

3. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus
according to claim 1, wherein the photographing condition
estimation means comprises:

focal position estimation means for estimating at least one
5 of three types of focal positions including a scenic
photographing operation, a portraiture photographing operation,
and a close-up photographing operation from the focal
information;

object distribution estimation means for estimating at least
10 one of three types of object distributions of an entire screen, a
center focus, and a central portion from the photometric
information; and

integration means for integrally estimating ~~a~~ the
photographing condition by combining the at least one focal
15 position estimated by the focal position estimation means and the
at least one object distribution estimated by the object
distribution estimation means.

Claim 4 (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the gradation correction ~~means~~ ~~adjusts a gradation range by~~ comprises reducing the gradation range.